

U.S.A.T. "BRIG. GEN. M. G. ZALINSKI"
Office of the Master
Seattle Port of Embarkation
Seattle 4, Washington

7 October 1946

SUBJECT: Loss of U.S.A.T. "ZALINSKI" on the night of 29 September 1946
in Grenville Channel, B. C.

TO: Superintendent, Water Division, Seattle Port of Embarkation,
1519 South Alaskan Way, Seattle 4, Washington.

1. At 1458 hours on 25 September 1946 this vessel left Pier 36 for Bangor, Wash. to load ammunition for Whittier, Alaska. At 1750 hours on 26 September loading operations were completed after taking approximately 85 tons, and the vessel left for her destination via Port Angeles. Upon arriving at Port Angeles that night at 2330 hours, the pilot was dropped and the vessel proceeded north thru the inside passage.

2. The vessel was loaded to nearly her full capacity which included a deck load about eight feet high, consisting of lumber, twenty-one trucks and two security boxes of ammunition by No. 4 hatch. Inasmuch as weather reports received prior to sailing indicated unfavorable weather off the coast, it was considered more feasible to use the inside passage.

3. On 27 September little difficulty was encountered navigating the vessel in spite of poor visibility. At 1826 hours the ship passed through Seymour Narrows making the passage on a high slack water. On the trip up to Chatham Point entering Johnston Straits at nightfall visibility was fair and the sky overcast with occasional rain squalls. The wind was from the Southeast at twenty-five to thirty miles per hour.

4. On 28 September daylight found the ship passing Pine Island, we had been experiencing continued rain squalls and a southeasterly wind at about thirty miles. In the afternoon the vessel passed thru Llama passage and continued on thru Millbank Sound. Continued poor visibility was encountered due to rain squalls. At 1845 hours the vessel passed Boat Bluff Light entering Channel up to Separation Head. At this point the visibility became very poor and it was necessary to slow to half speed, from here we proceeded with caution using the ship's whistle for an echo. We passed the Green Light west of Shara Island, also the White Light North of Shara Island proceeding northward. At about 2300, the visibility improved and we picked up Red Cliff light and sighted Work Island. The time at Work Island was 2350, and inasmuch as the visibility was better the undersigned left the bridge and went to bed, having been up since 0430 hours. At the time of leaving the bridge the pilot was instructed to awaken me if the weather got worse. At

- 2 -

that time the engine was turning over at half speed, the Pilot Mr. Thorwick was in charge and Mr. Graham the Third Officer was also on watch. There was a lookout posted on the F'e'sle head, the man on that position after midnight was John Burns. At 0230 hours on 29 September I awoke to hear the engine room telegraph ring "full ahead". After looking out the porthole and seeing the visibility was good, I returned to bed again.

5. At about 0358 hours on 29 September the vessel struck the port side beach quite violently. I immediately ran up on the bridge and upon seeing that the ship was laying up against the beach port side to, I had the bilges sounded and endeavored to determine the extent of the damage. It was soon evident that the vessel was sinking slowly, so the crew was ordered to swing out the life boats, the abandon ship order was given at about 0415 hours. The life boats were lowered in the water without a mishap and the crew were safe in them. At the time the boats pulled away, the ship was laying with a slight port list down at the head about four or five feet. The vessel was backing from the port hand of the channel with the effect of the wind, which was from the port quarter. The weather was then very rainy and extremely poor visibility with a strong Southeasterly wind blowing thirty-five to forty miles per hour. The Cannery Tender "SALLY S" (which had been standing by since the time of the accident) picked up the crew from both life boats and had them all aboard at about 0430 hours.

6. With the idea of determining definitely if the ship had sunk completely or whether any portion of her was visible the "SALLY S" remained near the scene of the wreck until daylight. When it was possible to see clearly at daylight the only remaining evidence of the ship appeared to be a large box which was used as a dog house, and had been located between the vehicles on top of No. 3 hatch. There was also a life raft on the beach and a life ring floated by in the water and considerable oil was noted on the surface. Inasmuch as there was nothing visible from the ship itself it was concluded that she sank in about fifty fathoms of water.

7. At about 0730 hours, the "SALLY S" proceeded on her way with the ship's crew aboard, it having been decided to stop in at Butedale and leave all the personnel at the Canadian Fisheries Cannery Dock to await further transportation to Seattle. It should be stated at this time that the crew behaved in a quiet and orderly manner and performed their duties quickly at the time of the accident and immediately after.

8. The vessel's lifeboats, which were in good condition, were left in care of the Superintendent, Buteale Fish Cannery, B. C.

Joseph N. Zardis
JOSEPH N. ZARDIS
Master
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